



MDCPS and CSF Focus on Strengthening Supervision as a Strategy for Staff Retention

There is significant research that shows the correlation between strong and effective supervision and staff feeling more amenable to their jobs and work place, as well as improving staff retention.¹ Knowing this, MDCPS has directed CSF to concentrate a significant portion of its work with the Department on strengthening supervision through building the skill sets of supervisors across the state in all fourteen regions. In the last two years, CSF has done this through four primary strategies.

Practice Model Learning Cycle

The Practice Model Learning Cycle (PMLC), developed in 2017, was designed to build upon and strengthen supervisory support of workers through the lens of Mississippi's Practice Model. The learning cycles were designed to have supervisors serve as the primary driver of skill building and behavior change with their staff. For each of the seven modules, supervisors attend preparation sessions with the rest of regional leadership for a two hour session to orient supervisors on how to: demonstrate the key behaviors for the module; provide feedback on their staffs use of the key behaviors through the use of fidelity indicators; and plan for effectively introducing the module to their staff. The supervisors are then responsible for introducing the modules in unit meetings with their staff, and are supported in this effort through job aides highlighting the key features of the virtual tutorials and daily interactions sheets to support supervisors reinforcing the content of the modules with their staff on an ongoing basis through staffings and supervision. Seven regions successfully completed all seven learning cycles in 2017, with an additional three regions currently going through the learning cycles in 2018.

Ongoing Coaching

For the seven regions who completed the PMLC in 2017, ongoing coaching and support is being provided in those regions to reinforce and further build upon the skills taught in the PMLC. Coaching is done through group coaching with supervisors focusing on specific topics identified by leadership as needing attention. Several of these regions have chosen as a focus staffing and retention in their group coaching sessions, and have developed an on boarding process based on focus groups they held with existing staff, to better orient new staff and create a more positive work environment.

Intensive Coaching Support

Four regions have been identified by state office leadership as having the need for more intensive coaching and support. In these regions, CSF coaches spend significantly more time providing support to supervisors and leadership through individual coaching, observations and feedback in supervisor-worker staffings or supervisor led unit meetings, and shadowing supervisors to further develop the individual skills of the supervisors in these regions. This intensive coaching support has helped boost morale and increased the confidence and skills of these regional leadership teams, including supervisors.

¹ Mor Barak, M.E., Travis, D.J., Pyun, H. & Xie, B. (2009). The impact of supervision on worker outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. Social Services Review 83 (1), 3-32. Workforce Resource One-Page Summary: Supervision. National Child Welfare Workforce Institute. Retrieved on 6/14/18 (<http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/Supervision%201%20pager.pdf>)

Capacity Assessments

For the four regions that have not taken part in the PMLC due to capacity assessments identifying concerns with these regions being able to effectively participate in the learning cycles, MDCPS state office leadership and CSF developed a strategy to help monitor and determine when these four regions may be ready to participate in the PMLC. These regions are guided to regularly consider data in key areas of safety, permanency and the systemic issues of staffing and supervisory ratios along with barriers that may prevent them from successfully taking part in the PMLC. CSF coaches work with these regions to address identified barriers and to strengthen the regions supervision in order to ultimately participate in the PMLC. MDCPS state leadership and CSF will soon meet individually with these four regions to assess where they have made improvements and if they have addressed the identified barriers in order to begin participating in the PMLC.